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FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM: AMCONGEN, Lagos, Nigeria

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DESP. NO.

TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

October 6, 1952
DATE

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SUBJECT: Fortnightly Newsletter - September 22 - October 4, 1952

POLITICAL

Lagos Town Council Enquiry

Commission of enquiry into LTC affairs ends on September 29 with cross-accusations between (NCNC affiliate) Democratic Alliance majority and (AG affiliate) Area Council undiminished. Commissioner STOREY now making "private enquiries" in Lagos and Ibadan; probably to write decision by October 31. Seems clear LTC very badly administered for political and personal causes but apparently no technical violations of law proved. Testimony did little to suggest remedial measures.

Developments in Warri Dispute

Itsekri-Urhobo dispute over Olu of Warri title relatively quiet. Violence reported past week almost nil. Urhobo markets still refusing sell to Itsekris. Government changed name Warri Province to Delta Province September 26 in hope will diminish grounds for discontent over Olu's title. Forty Urhobos on trial.

Action Group in Northern Region

Formal inauguration Kano branch AG by Obafemi AWOLOWO October 4. Party hitherto confined Western Region but reported attempting form branches through all of North. AG also reported approaching Northern People's Congress (party of Sardauna of Sokoto) for cooperation. NPC has been close to NCNC. Action important in changing AG from obviously regional party to national one and presents NCNC with further challenge.

Ijebu-Ode Chieftain Repudiated

Native Authority Council at Ijebu-Ode (Western Region town) voted "no confidence" in Awujale of Ijebu-Ode and asked end to his remunerations. Chiefs on Native Authority Council accuse Awujale of corruption, maladministration on behalf of community.

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REPORTER

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Two other recent actions of similar nature and persistent chieftaincy disputes Western Region prompt Action Group insistence such matters be made part of Nigerian law instead relying upon traditional checks only.

Acting Governor to Tour North

A. E. T. BENSON to tour Northern Region October 13 to 28.

Awolowo More Accessible

Awolowo announces unofficial visiting hours his Ibadan residence for public. Marked contrast with AZIKIWE's inaccessibility.

ECONOMIC

Cocoa Crop Endangered

Unprecedented September and past week rains threaten cocoa crop. Incidence of "black Pod" fungus disease already very high and Government urging farmers pick single pods as soon as ready, thus lessening exposure to fungus. Previous good estimates for crop now placed in doubt.

Nigerian Bank Fails

Depositors in Nigerian-owned Standard Bank informed last week bank closed; but Government refused allow legal closure until notice and stockholders' meeting requirements fulfilled. Public notice admits inefficient management, dishonest accounting, etc. This bank less than year old but pointed to by Nigerians as example honesty, stability of native banks. Closure after extensive bragging and high-flown publicity buttresses official contention native banks must be severely regulated.

Phony Company Directors Sentenced

Following Attorney-General's avowed policy cracking down on myriad fraudulent commercial "companies" three young Nigerians sentenced two years hard labor. Utilizing grandiose letterheads, other trappings commercial reliability individuals had bilked European firms of over £3,000. Practice widespread and Government and public opinion insist Nigeria cannot afford continued deterioration her commercial reputation abroad.

Continental Beer Open Again

Government again permitting importation European beer - but only to December 31. Re-examination of policy at that time.

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No Extension Nigerian Railway Now

Chief Bode THOMAS, Minister of Transport, announces no extension rail facilities planned. Claims present inadequacy railroad due shortage spare parts ordered in U.K. Order for 44 engines in U.K. delayed by steel shortage.

Asked about development loans Thomas said Nigeria wanted private enterprise instead, but in "partnership" with Nigerians.

Heavy Rains Cut Road Communications

Recent downpours have washed out bridges and cut roads in all sections Nigeria. Maiduguri - Fort Lamy road not open for at least another week. Roads to Cameroons still impassable.

INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

Zik's College Gets N.Y.U. Graduate

Dr. Chuba UDOKWU joined staff Azikiwe's Lagos City College. Udokwu has B. Sc. and M.A. from N.Y.U. and D. Ed. from Toronto. Turned down Nigerian Department of Education offer of "junior service" job, he says.

North to Train Physicians

Northern Region announces Kano school for training Northern medical assistants for staffing health centers, rural dispensaries, small hospitals. Capital cost put at £30,000. Former principal Yaba Medical School (Dr. W. E. S. MERRET) named school head.

Robert W. Ross

Robert W. Ross
Vice Consul

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